7. Africa's population is young, as reflected in a median age of 17.3. This compares with a median age of 21.0 years in less developed regions, 23.5 years for the world, and 32.5 years in more developed regions. Children, i.e., those aged 0-14, constitute 45 per cent of the total population in Africa, youths (those aged 15-24) 19 per cent, the 15-59 year age group 50.2 per cent and the elderly (60 years and over) 4.8 per cent. These figures mean that Africa is handicapped by the highest dependency ratios, despite the lowest proportion of elderly people, although the absolute number of old people is increasing. As mortality rates improve, so the population is slowly ageing.

8. Africa's population growth rate, which was less than 2.2 per cent in 1950, is currently around 3 per cent per annum and this will not change much to the turn of the century. At this rate, the population will double in size in 23 years to reach about 1.26 billion by the year 2 012. At that time, Africa's population growth rate may reach a level higher by 1.8 per cent than that of the world as a whole and 5.7 times higher than the rate of the more developed regions (see table 2).

9. West Africa has the highest growth rates followed by Eastern Africa, Middle Africa, North Africa and then Southern Africa. Both the young population age structure and the high population growth rates have implications for the provision of social services and amenities such as education, employment, health, food, housing, etc., as will be discussed in section III.

B. Fertility

10. Fertility in Africa has been the highest in the world since 1950 when the crude birth rate was 49 per 1,000 as compared with an estimated 45 per 1,000 today. Between 1995-2000 little change is expected in its decline. As shown in table 3, Africa's present crude birth rate is about three times that of the more developed regions. Variations exist in the crude birth rates among the subregions in Africa and they follow a similar pattern to population growth rates.

11. Fertility can be examined in terms of total fertility per woman, as shown in table 4. Between 1950-1955 and a woman had averaged 6.6 children, current estimates are 6.2 children per woman, i.e., a decline of only 6 per cent over some 40 years. Thus fertility has remained very high and almost unchanged for many years. Some decline, however, may be expected by the turn of the century. The total fertility figure of 6.2 compares with 3.4 for the world, 1.9 in more developed regions and 3.9 in less developed regions.

C. Mortality

12. Nearly all Governments in Africa are concerned about high mortality rates and strive to reduce them. The crude death rate (i.e., the number of deaths per 1,000 population), fell by about 45 per cent from 27.0 in 1950-1955 to the present estimates of 14.9. Although this is a significant decline, the rates are still the highest in the world. By the turn of the century, the crude death rate is expected to decline to 12 for the continent, as shown in table 5.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The mid-term review of the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development revealed that, in spite of the tremendous efforts by governments to cope with the socio-economic problems, the situation continued to worsen, as a result of the combined action of many factors, which are not within the scope of this paper. Suffice it to indicate that population trends in Africa contribute to the overall picture. Document A/43/500, on the critical economic situation in Africa, submitted to the forty-third session of the General Assembly, clearly highlighted the population problem (paras. 83 to 85).

2. The purpose of this paper is to present the demographic trends in Africa and their implications for the implementation of the UN-PAAERD. It will also discuss some issues related to policies, as generally perceived and implemented by member States. Clearly, the life span of five years for the Programme of Action is too brief for action undertaken within its framework to bear significant results on population trends. Both past policies and present ones have their impact on the dynamics of population, however, and they have consequences on the development objectives in all countries. It is necessary, therefore, to consider the trends from 1950 in order to understand fully the contemporary situation and give the right framework for the consideration of the population dimension.

3. The Kilimanjaro Programme of Action (KPA), now five years old, recognizes that population is a central component in formulating and implementing policies and programmes for socio-economic development. It addresses all aspects of population changes and constitutes the main reference for the recommendations geared to action in this field. This has been acknowledged in both Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery (APPER), 1986-1990 and the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery (UN-PAAERD).

II. PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE POPULATION TRENDS

4. The 1988 United Nations Assessment on Population and the 1987 Monitoring Report on World Population Trends and Policies give the latest available data and estimates for reviewing past and future trends and the current situation. Selected variables are considered, including population size, structure, growth rates, fertility, mortality, distribution and internal migration and population-related policies.

5. International migration was not included in the review, as it is a significant problem for only a few countries. Intra-African migration certainly plays a role in the labour market and in the flow of remittances and goods between countries, but any assessment of its importance is hampered by lack of data. Refugees are another dimension of the problem.

A. Population size, structure and growth rates

6. Africa's total population, which was estimated at about 224 million in 1950, will reach 628.3 million in mid-1989 and 872.2 million by the turn of the century. Table 1 in the annex shows population distribution by subregion. In 1989, Eastern Africa will contain 30 per cent of Africa's total population, Middle Africa 10.7 per cent, North Africa 22.1 per cent, Southern Africa 6.4 per cent and West Africa 30.7 per cent.

13. Infant mortality which was estimated at 137 per 1,000 births in Africa between 1950-1955 has declined to the present figure of 106/1,000, representing a 43 per cent reduction. It is expected that by the turn of the century infant mortality will further decline to 88, as shown in table . Africa's present infant mortality rate is seven times that of more developed regions and 1.3 times that of less developed regions. Among the subregions in Africa, Southern Africa has the lowest rates of infant mortality followed by North Africa, Middle Africa and West Africa, while Eastern Africa has the highest rates.

14. A commonly used indicator to measure the impact of mortality and health conditions is life expectancy (i.e., the number of years a person could expect to live at birth under the prevailing health conditions, as shown in table 7. Between 1950-1955, life expectancy in Africa was 35.0 years. This estimate has increased by 38.6 per cent, to reach the present figure of 51.9 years and it is expected to reach 55.7 years between 1995-2000. Present life expectancy is 21.5 years lower in Africa than in the more developed countries.

D. Population distribution and internal migration

1. Urbanization

15. Of the total population in Africa, 22.5 per cent lived in urban areas in 1970; this increased to almost 30 per cent in 1985 and is expected to reach about 33 per cent in 1990, and 39 per cent by the year 2000. In contrast, about 72 per cent live in cities in more developed areas. The forecast of urban population in Africa by subregion in 1990 ranges from 21.5 per cent in Eastern Africa to 55.3 per cent in Southern Africa with 27.9 per cent in West Africa, 44.6 per cent in North Africa and 21.5 per cent in Middle Africa. Although Africa is the least urbanized region in the world, its urban population is growing at about 5 per cent per year; ranging from 6.0 per cent in Eastern Africa to 3.7 per cent in the North and Southern African subregions and 5.5 per cent for Middle and West Africa.

2. Internal migration and spatial population distribution

16. As most of Africa's population is in the rural areas, there is considerable movement of people within rural areas, but unfortunately no reliable data is available. The movement from rural to urban areas, however, causes more concern. In most countries the movement is concentrated usually in the capital cities or main commercial towns and the uneven distribution of the population is a serious problem for many governments. The reasons behind the rural to urban movement lie partly in the unequal development of both areas, although the varying distribution of the population in rural areas may be related to natural resource endowment, e.g., good agricultural land and the availability of water or to the prevalence of disease which may force people to move to safer places. Political factors may also contribute to uneven distribution of the population, for example the refugee problem which has affected and continues to affect many countries. Drought and desertification may cause population redistribution problems, as was stressed in APPER and the UN-PAAERD, which earmarked them priority areas for action.

E. Population-related policies

17. The population policies discussed here cover growth, fertility and family planning, population distribution and internal migration. The data refer to July 1986. It is worth stressing that, in spite of the pressing problems generated by the economic crisis that demand immediate action and, therefore, do not relate primarily to population issues, governments in the region increasingly turned their attention to population problems and began to draw up appropriate policies.

18. Thirty of the 51 African countries considered their population growth rates to be too high; 20 of them took steps to reduce the growth rates, but no direct intervention is reported from the other 10. Sixteen countries indicated their population growth to be satisfactory. Only five considered their rates as too low and two of them would like to raise the rates. Some of the countries have specific targets in view; for example, Nigeria, plans a reduction from the present 3.3 per cent per year to 2.6 per cent by the year 2000. Among the countries which have had growth rate reduction policies in force for some time, e.g., Kenya and Ghana, the results have not been successful, partly because the measures have not been vigorously applied and also because the mechanisms and infrastructures for implementation were weak. Furthermore, the cultural values favouring large families have not changed significantly in the majority of the population, so that it is almost impossible to implement a strong and effective policy. Lack of adequate resources was also a major constraint.

19. In 1986, three countries considered their fertility levels as too low and devised policies to increase them; 31 countries perceived their levels as too high and 21 of them took active steps to reduce the levels; 17 countries were satisfied with their levels. Direct support to the effective use of modern methods of fertility regulation was provided by 38 governments in 1986; in six others only indirect support was provided; and in only seven countries was no government support made available.

20. The change in perceptions to favour family planning programmes came in 1984 with the adoption of the Kilimanjaro Programme of Action, which called on governments to accept and implement family planning as part of the mother and child health programmes to lower infant, childhood and maternal mortality. Many countries now implement family planning for health reasons, in the context of primary health care programmes, while others also aim to reduce fertility and thus population growth rates. Such policies to reduce fertility have not yet been successful; fertility levels are still very high or increasing. Nigeria, for example, has set specific targets as recommended by the World Population Plan of Action with regard to reduction of fertility by the year 2000. These include the following:

(a) Family planning services should reach 80 per cent of the women of child-bearing age group;

(b) Total fertility to be reduced from the present level of more than six children per woman to about four children;

(c) To reduce by 80 per cent the proportion of women having children after age 35;

(d) Eighty per cent of the women of child-bearing age should receive their spacing interval of at least two years; and

(e) Reduce by 50 per cent the proportion of women marrying before the age of 18.

21. With regard to the spatial distribution of population in 1986, no country in Africa considered its geographical distribution as totally appropriate, 17 considered it as partially appropriate, while the majority (34) considered it as inappropriate.

22. Many governments are trying various ways to address these problems. In Ethiopia for example measures already put in place have been undertaken and are still being implemented. In Zambia the emphasis is on bringing isolated rural areas together through re-organization, village regrouping and the establishment of small-scale industries. In some countries, emphasis is on balanced development. Egypt is for instance siting new cities in desert areas and has designated several new growth development regions. In the rural areas, attempts are underway to create non-agricultural jobs. In some countries new capital cities have been established, partly in order to create a better distribution of population away from existing cities or regions. So far population distribution patterns do not seem to have achieved the desired effects.

III. IMPLEMENTATION OF POPULATION TRENDS IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UN-PAAERD

23. The UN-PAAERD called on ECA member states to accord special importance to the implementation of population policies in the context of the Kilimanjaro Programme of Action. Among the issues addressed in the PPA are those related to high fertility and mortality, rapid urbanization, rural-urban and rural-rural migration, problems relating to children and youth and the protection of the environment. The objective is to ensure compatibility between demographic trends, appropriate land utilization and settlement patterns and the desired pace of economic growth and development. The UN-PAAERD further called on ECA member States to push for the attainment of an agro-food production growth rate at least equal to the population growth rate within the shortest possible time. It has already been noted that the population policies implemented so far have not succeeded in many countries in reducing population growth rates. Population growth rates have surpassed economic growth rates. Some sectors are briefly referred to, using socio-economic indicators contained in an ECA study on "Beyond Recovery: ECA-revised perspectives of Africa's development 1986-2000".

24. While the overall performance of GDP during the first two years of the implementation of the UN-PAAERD increased by 1.2 and 1.5 per cent in real terms, in 1986 and 1987 respectively, the population growth rate in Africa for the same period was 3.0 per cent and per capita GDP growth rates were -2.0 per cent in 1986 and -1.7 per cent in 1987. The GDP growth rate in agriculture was 3 per cent in 1986 and fell to 1 per cent in 1987. With regard to GDP in investment, the growth rate was -5 per cent in both 1986 and 1987. Food production grew at between 1 and 1.5 per cent per year during the first half of the 1980s while population growth rate was about 3 per cent. The imbalance between food production and population growth rates

calls for the importation of great amounts of food which many African countries cannot afford because of their weak economies, debt payment problems and shortage of hard currency. A reject to food aid was necessary. Food shortages have had a considerable impact on nutrition and the health of the population, especially of the young, the mothers and the elderly, particularly in the case of refugees in some countries.

25. With regard to the problems related to children and youth, it should be noted that both these groups is growing very fast but increasing educational, health and employment needs are not being met as quickly. Investments in public and private education have declined since 1980. Government expenditure on education per capita dropped from $US 41 in 1980 to $US 28 in 1985. Enrolment increases in both primary and secondary schools declined between 1980 and 1985. There is no data available to show that the situation has improved. In higher education, enrolment increases dropped by 60 per cent between 1980 and the beginning of 1985. The quality of education has also deteriorated.

26. The situation related to employment opportunities is equally grim. An increasing number of primary and secondary school leavers have no chance of finding jobs, in many countries. University graduates find it difficult to get jobs. In 1985, 20 million people were unemployed and 95 million people were said to be underemployed. Between 1980 and 1986 income per capita declined at an annual rate of 3.4 per cent, while real wages during the same period declined by an average of at least 15 per cent. The overall impact of these trends on a rapidly growing population is increasing misery and a worsening of human conditions.

27. Population pressure is one of the causes of destruction of the natural ecosystems. Depletion of forests for fuelwood, overgrazing and poor land management all contribute to desertification, which in 1985 affected 27 African countries. The continued increase in population growth rates augments the demand for fuelwood to the extent that in some areas women have to walk long distances to fetch wood. The price has, therefore, increased several times over in most urban areas. Although afforestation programmes have been initiated in some countries, they are not on sufficient a scale to match the rate at which forests are destroyed. Moreover afforestation programmes will take a long time to have an impact on the destroyed environment. Nevertheless, the policies of afforestation and proper soil management should be vigorously implemented and alternative sources of energy should be explored. Women, whether in farming, fetching and collecting fuelwood or carrying water, are in constant touch with the environment and thus they should be more involved in programmes of environment management and protection.

28. Population growth pressures on urban development continue to frustrate government efforts to improve housing conditions, education, health, transportation, services, amenities and infrastructure. Unemployment has become a serious problem. Under such conditions, crime, juvenile delinquency and other social disorders tend to manifest themselves and even to become widespread.

29. Population is by no means the sole cause of Africa's socio-economic problems, but nevertheless it has a great impact. Continued population growth rates do, indeed, slow down most of the attempts to consolidate and broaden

broader socio-economic development. Hence any development strategies s include policies to influence population variables as put forward in KPA.

IV. SUMMARY AND ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

30. The African population is estimated to have increased by 180 per to 628 million in 1989, since 1950 and half the people are under 17.3 Children and youth constitute respectively 45 and 19 per cent of the t Fertility has remained very high since the early 1950s at above six chi per woman. Mortality on the other hand, has declined considerably the 1950s; infant mortality declined by 43 per cent and crude death by 45 per cent. The present infant mortality rate for Africa, however seven times that of the more developed regions. Life expectancy at is 21 years behind the level of the more developed regions. The com effects of very high fertility and high but declining mortality have res in very high population growth rates; 3 per cent on average for Africa, many individual countries have even higher rates. Africa has the hi fertility, mortality and population growth rates, and the lowest expectancy at birth in comparison with all other regions of the world.

31. Africa is the least urbanized continent with only about a third of population living in urban areas. The urban population, however, is gr at about 5 per cent per year. This situation is expected to continue at least the turn of the century. Population distribution, in most count is considered as a serious problem and many attempts at solutions have so far been successful.

32. Perceptions on population issues have greatly changed among Af countries. The need to take population as a central variable in socio-eco development has been generally agreed upon. Family planning programmes now broadly accepted in protecting and improving the health of children mothers and sometimes for reducing fertility and population growth as well. Existing population policies to reduce fertility and popul growth rates have not been successful for many reasons - the progr were not vigorously implemented, the infrastructure and manage implementation were weak; the cultures and values favouring large fami did not change significantly; resources for the programmes were not adequat

33. Demographic factors during the period of the implementation of the PAAERD have had some impact in retarding the effect of efforts geare bring about a balance between the population dynamics and socio-econ development in general. No population programme, however vigoro implemented, could change population growth rates in as short a perio five years, but this does not mean that action should not be initiate pursued.

34. From the presentation above, the following issues may be put for for consideration, and discussion:

(a) Population dynamics will continue to affect socio-econ development adversely, if present trends in both population and econ growth are not matched. It is not enough merely to include populatio a central factor of socio-economic development; more countries need to formulate and implement relevant comprehensive population policies to complement socio-economic development;

(b) Based on past experiences of various population-related policies, alternative solutions should continually be sought;

(c) Any policies designed to reduce fertility and population growth rates must ensure: (i) that the population at grass roots (both men and women) are motivated through population information education on the advantages of small family size; (ii) that traditional values favouring birth spacing be reinstated and that smaller families should be preferred; (iii) that family planning programmes and the means of regulating fertility should be made available to the majority of the population, especially in the rural areas; (iv) that local communities are involved in the programmes; (v) that, where necessary, legislation be taken or amended to facilitate the increased use of modern methods on fertility regulations; and (vi) that action to decrease infant and child mortality be stepped up, as the survival of children is seen as an insurance for the future of the parents;

(d) Mechanisms and institutions for designing and monitoring policies should be put into effect;

(e) Women should be actively involved in the formulation and implementation of policies which affect their lives. Policies relating to population and women in the development process should be promoted and implemented; and

(f) Governments which have not yet initiated explicit population policies should do so, in line with the recommendations of the KPA.

35. Population is a resource which could be put to good use to solve the existing socio-economic problems besetting Africa. The challenge remains of how best the existing large human numbers can be used to solve the problems of development. Past and present actions have failed, and there may be little hope that with larger populations a better future lies ahead. Population is both an asset and a liability, but obviously with less pressure on the demand and with more opportunity to use its human resources to the best advantage, Africa should benefit greatly.

Table 1: African population 1950-2000
(in thousands)

Region	1950	1989	1990	1995	2000
Eastern Africa	64 978	188 765	194 823	228 947	269 185
Middle Africa	26 841	67 543	69 564	80 710	93 498
Northern Africa	51 798	138 908	142 645	161 832	181 481
Southern Africa	15 736	40 037	40 972	45 889	51 172
Western Africa	64 722	193 064	199 511	235 247	276 898
All Africa	224 075	628 317	647 518	752 626	872 234

Source: United Nations, World Population Prospects, 1988 Assessment, Medium Variant (computer printouts).

Table 2: Annual population growth rates in Africa in comparison with more developed and less developed regions, 1950-2000
(in percentage)

Region	1950-1955	1975-1980	1985-1990	1995-2000
Eastern Africa	2.26	3.04	3.09	3.24
Middle Africa	1.85	3.01	2.91	2.94
Northern Africa	2.26	2.78	2.73	2.29
Southern Africa	2.28	2.31	2.33	2.18
Western Africa	2.13	3.10	3.26	3.26
Total Africa	2.18	2.85	3.00	2.95
World	1.80	1.74	1.73	1.62
More developed regions	1.28	0.73	0.53	0.45
Less developed regions	2.05	2.10	2.10	1.92

Source: United Nations, World Population Prospects, 1988 Assessment, Medium variant (computer printouts).

Table 3: Crude birth rates in Africa in comparison with more developed and less developed regions 1950-2000
(per 1,000 population)

Region	1950-1955	1985-1990	1995-2000
Eastern Africa	50.3	47.8	45.9
Middle Africa	46.6	44.9	42.5
Northern Africa	48.9	38.0	30.9
Southern Africa	43.7	33.4	29.8
Western AFrica	49.7	48.9	46.0
Total Africa	48.9	44.7	41.4
World	37.4	27.1	24.8
More developed regions	22.6	14.6	13.5
Less developed regions	44.6	30.9	27.7

Source: United Nations, World Population Prospects, 1988 Assessment, medium variant (computer printouts).

Table 4: Total fertility rate in Africa in comparison with more developed and less developed regions 1950-2000

Region	1950-1955	1985-1990	1995-2000
Eastern Africa	6.71	6.74	6.36
Middle Africa	5.92	6.03	5.72
Northern Africa	6.83	5.32	4.17
Southern Africa	6.45	4.68	4.10
Western Africa	6.69	6.84	6.38
Total Africa	6.61	6.23	5.66
World	5.00	3.44	3.13
More developed regions	2.84	1.90	1.90
Less developed regions	6.18	3.92	3.45

Source: United Nations, World Population Prospects, 1988 Assessment, medium variant (computer printouts).

Table 5: Crude death rates in Africa in comparison with more developed and less developing regions, 1950-2000
(per 1,000 population)

Region	1950-1955	1985-1990	1995-2000
Eastern Africa	28.2	17.0	13.5
Middle Africa	27.6	16.0	13.2
Northern Africa	24.7	10.7	8.0
Southern Africa	21.0	10.1	8.0
Western Africa	28.5	16.5	13.5
Total Africa	27.0	14.9	12.0
World	19.7	9.9	8.7
More developed regions	10.1	9.8	9.5
Less developed regions	24.3	9.9	8.5

Source: United Nations, World Population Prospects, 1988 Assessment, medium variant (computer printouts).

Table 6: Infant mortality rate per 1,000 births in Africa in comparison with more developed and less developed regions, 1950-2000

Region	1950-1955	1985-1990	1995-2000
Eastern Africa	179	116	97
Middle Africa	183	107	89
Northern Africa	189	86	63
Southern Africa	152	77	57
Western Africa	204	112	94
Total Africa	187	106	88
World	155	71	58
More developed regions	56	15	11
Less developed regions	180	79	64

Source: United Nations, World Population Prospects, 1988 Assessment, medium variant (computer printouts).

Table 7. Life expectancy at birth in Africa in comparison with more developed and less developed regions, 1950-2000
(in years for both sexes)

Region	1950-1955	1985-1990	1995-2000
Eastern Africa	36.5	49.8	54.0
Middle Africa	36.9	50.0	54.0
Northern Africa	41.9	59.0	63.1
Southern Africa	44.1	59.7	64.5
Western Africa	35.6	49.4	53.5
Total Africa	38.0	51.9	55.7
World	45.9	61.5	64.5
More developed regions	65.7	73.4	75.4
Less developed regions	41.0	59.7	63.1

Source: United Nations, World Population Prospects, 1988 Assessment, medium variant (computer printouts).